

addiction and religion

Posted by lavi - 14 Jul 2014 20:17

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To my dear friends,

I'm writing this post, to express my view, about religion (jewish) and addiction. I know already that there are many esteemed "gyes" who differ. I know also that chochmah has been used to help out addiction and I can understand this and I even agree on this point. I actually had the zchus to speak about this personally with Harav Wolbe zatzal. Also I wish to acknowledge the usefulness of programs like the twelve steps and all the other tools that can be used to help and recover from addiction. What I specifically want to address is the following points, the goal of recovery, the advantage of recovery and the connection between religion and recovery.

I also want to acknowledge that I understand that for some people mixing in religion to recovery is too heavy. Ok. And for others they don't see the point. Ok. Others say we see the connection, but one thing at a time. Ok.

What I am writing concern people who are concerned about how their spiritual level is effected by addiction and are wondering how to focus on shteiging in the mist of addiction, in a healthy way. It also must be mentioned that the one day at a time approach seems to be quite popular here, so if someone feels that way, good for you, and even if you don't feel that way, it maybe worth trying.

But I suspect that there are others, myself included that want to and need to view ourselves via the future and this is a very big decider for us in the battle of now. We need to know where is recovery taking us, and the answer a nice normal life, without ups and downs isn't tempting enough. And also for the ultra normals , do you thing you can stay your whole life treading water?

A normal and balanced life has it's big advantages and it is good for the person and his family and the whole world at large. Especially people who have addictions- how very important it is to become "normal".

If I may however go a step further. After a certain period of being normal, I think that is the nature of most people to want more, more? What more?

It may be that deep inside we seek fulfillment something more than regular day to day life. there comes a time, for some more often than others, that you feel a need for something exciting. I'm not talking about outlets or distractions or something by the way, I'm talking about a deep seated need to feel accomplished in life. In my humble opinion, Hashem put in our religion various mitzvos to give us this. Therefore everyone should make it their business, to see how and what, when and where they can put serious effort in their spiritual endeavors, at least sh"o lishmah, or according to some this is a part of lishmah, to find our greatest enjoyment and fulfillment in the torah, it has potential to recharge our batteries and bring inner satisfactory and peace to ourselves. If fact this may even be our "normal" state in ideal settings.

And it isn't optional. If we don't find our high's in good things, we will slide into bad high's.  
may Hashem help us reach our proper potential.

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Re: addiction and religion

Posted by unanumun - 15 Jul 2014 00:05

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The mesilas yesharim says in the end of the first perek that the reason we are alive is:

- 1.to do mitzvohs (????? ?????)
2. to serve Hashem (?????)
3. to withstand trials (??????? ????????)

if the meaning of a normal life to you is not having ups and downs, you are making a mistake.

One of the purposes of life is to be oimed in nisayon. Once you recover (It should be soon G-d willing) from lust addiction, you will go on to the next set of nisyonos in life. that is what life is about. your job is not to win the war but the battles.

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Re: addiction and religion

Posted by lavi - 15 Jul 2014 00:32

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agreed. i meant that it may help to focus on the high's available in proper way in order to break  
the seeking out the bad

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Re: addiction and religion

Posted by kilochalu - 20 Jul 2014 04:43

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[unanumun wrote:](#)

your job is not to win the war but the battles.

or at least to try to make the right decisions during the battle

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Re: addiction and religion

Posted by kilochalu - 20 Jul 2014 05:07

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[unanumun wrote:](#)

your job is not to win the war but the battles.

or at least to try to make the right decisions during the battle

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Re: addiction and religion

Posted by lavi - 23 Jul 2014 09:12

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hi friends

what i see about myself is a connection between addiction and religion.

this is because, without our religion life becomes shallow. existence is not meaningful. what are we, for what am i living? just to eat drink and be merry?

or the more noble thoughts are i'm living for my family. was i born just to have a family? isn't my own feelings worth a dime without my family? and lets say i would be someone without family? am i chopped liver? bunch of atoms flying around?

what does the above have to do with addiction?

addiction shows where my desire is. now lets be honest. why can't i run after my desires with all my gusto? why should i care about morals? so other people should look at me and say "hmmm, decent guy" am i living my life to get approval from others? don't i have my own goals and expectation? ambition? personality?- very sad if i have to spend my whole life getting approval from others. so let me find happiness in life. sorry, i don't buy the way some people put it. just live life. the good normal life. what for? and to do right because it feels right? well i think there are things that FEEL better.

why should i break my addiction?

here religion comes into play. a reason to live. a powerful and compelling way to understand life. and A FULFILLING one to. make no mistake- our religion shows you how to get the best ZEST from life. find out more. ask you rabbi- challenge him- rabbi, how do i get the all my needs fulfilled in religion.

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Re: addiction and religion

Posted by ineedchizuk - 23 Jul 2014 10:51

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Hi Lavi,

About challenging your Rabbi, why don't you start. What does Rabbi Wolbe zt"l say about religion and addiction?

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Re: addiction and religion

Posted by shivisi - 23 Jul 2014 11:28

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[lavi wrote:](#)

hi friends

so let me find happiness in life. sorry, i don't buy the way some people put it. just live life. the good normal life. what for? and to do right because it feels right? well i think there are things that FEEL better.

why should i break my addiction?

NO! not because it FEELS right, because that is the way **you really WANT to feel!**,because that is the life **You WANT to live!**

You know for yourself that those "things that feel better" are just temporary instant gratifications, which cause you to feel disgusting afterward! You WANT to live a clean and emotionally healthy life which REALLY feels good!

Put religion aside for a moment, just think about what YOU really really want in life!

NOW put religion back into the picture. **That is the life** which Hashem wants you to live!

All the best,

Hatzlacha Rabba

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Re: addiction and religion  
Posted by lavi - 23 Jul 2014 20:25

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thanks gang for feedback.

yeah shivisi, i know what you mean.

but the fact is in our day and age if you ask the person who hasn't any religious education "dear sir, please define your idea of a clean and emotionally healthy life" he will look at you with his mouth hanging open. and if you ask him "please define right and wrong?" he will say "who told you there is right and wrong?" leave alone you religious wacko. don't you know we are intelligent monkeys and everything we do is basically instinct.

you see free choice= God. there no other way to explain how we really choose anything. if all our decisions are a result of things that happened in the past then i don't really have free choice ( meaning i can't be mechadesh anything at this point- so what am i choosing?(deep).

sorry for going off the point, i just want to point out that the unreligious person doesn't differentiate between what he wants and what he feels. why should he?

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Re: addiction and religion

Posted by cordnoy - 23 Jul 2014 20:37

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Obviously, you have not been to an SA meetin'.

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Re: addiction and religion

Posted by lavi - 23 Jul 2014 23:49

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no i haven't

and you would be more helpful if you would explain yourself

instead of stating something obvious

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Re: addiction and religion

Posted by cordnoy - 24 Jul 2014 00:52

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Sorry....

But....

that which you wrote as fact is probably exactly the opposite. While it is true that some people may respond the way you said, the people in recovery would not. [Many people on the street wouldn't answer the way you said either - it's kind of a Yeshivishe way to look at things that unless you are orthodox you do not know right and wrong. the world is full of irreligious people with morals and values.]

The people in SA especially talk about cleanliness and how they want their life to be manageable. Eventually, if they use the whitebook, they will say 'higher power,' and some will say they found God.

I'm not sure what you were sayin' in the second point.

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Re: addiction and religion

Posted by dms1234 - 24 Jul 2014 01:11

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Lavi, that is way to philosophical for me and apparently Cordnoy too. As Cordnoy hinted at, God is essential in recovery and yes we could talk about all the requirements of Mitzvahs and savannah, ya ya ya. But for an addict like me, i need simplicity. There is a Higher Power, and He loves me and cares for me. He knows that I can do it (of course with the help of him)

As for the philosophical underpinnings (Is there a God?) thats important but for my recovery it just complicates things for me. This is what Dov calls thinking too much.

All I need is, how can I be clean right now? maybe later we can talk religion.

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Re: addiction and religion

Posted by lavi - 24 Jul 2014 09:55

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dear friends, thanks for posting

that which you wrote as fact is probably exactly the opposite. While it is true that some people may respond the way you said, the people in recovery would not. [Many people on the street wouldn't answer the way you said either - it's kind of a Yeshivishe way to look at things that unless you are orthodox you do not know right and wrong. the world is full of irreligious people with morals and values.]-cordnoy

just for the record, i've lived in 4 continents, and have contact with all kinds of people. and i have spent time in ohr samayach. but then again i guess you're entitled to you're opinion.

All I need is, how can I be clean right now? maybe later we can talk religion.-dms

i can respect your approach if you say it works for you. my point is that i think that there are a lot of people who feel a void in their lives, as well as addiction problems- and they find it hard to work on addiction, when they don't see the purpose of life. ( is this simple enough?)

and yes we could talk about all the requirements of Mitzvahs and savannah, ya ya ya. - dms.

v'yadaber Hashem el moshe B'savannah laymor... yeah there is a connection...

like i mentioned, i am not speaking about requirements. i am speaking about giving ourselves the peace of mind, that religion offers (though it maybe a requirement).

if you don't feel frustrated and you are successful in working on addiction without religion- ok,

but if, just if, you feel frustrated about your current situation, you may be surprised how religion can help you as a tool for recovery. especially if someone has failed repeatedly in his efforts.

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Re: addiction and religion

Posted by shivisi - 24 Jul 2014 11:06

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[lavi wrote:](#)

i just want to point out that the unreligious person doesn't differentiate between what he wants and what he feels. why should he?



Did u ever hear of the saying "Think out of the box"?

Of course when someone thinks only about what he feels while he's inside the box of momentary pleasure, he'll say "this is what I feel and this is what I want", but hey let's think a little "out of the box". What do I really want to FEEL in the general picture of my life, What scenario really makes me FEEL GOOD? Is it those few minutes of sexual pleasure, Those few seconds of sexual climax??? leaving all the rest of my life with a feeling of emptiness and worthlessness??? or do I really want to feel good about MYSELF and about my life???

This question has nothing at all to do with philosophy, or spirituality, or religion. It's a simple question of "thinking out of the box".

So even those of you who are not philosophically inclined, and/or who like it "as plain and simple as possible", I invite you to try a bit of simple "thinking out of the box"!

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